

Top 10 Nebraska News Stories, 2013⁵⁰

1. A touchdown run by 7-year-old Jack Hoffman during the Nebraska Cornhusker spring intrasquad game drew national attention. Video of the young cancer patient's 69-yard run won an ESPY award as the "Best Moment" of the year.

2. Lt. Gov. Rick Sheehy resigned after revelations that he made thousands of calls to women other than his wife on a state-issued cellphone. University of Nebraska Regent Laron Heidemann was sworn into office two weeks later.

3. U.S. Sen. Mike Johanns announced in February that he would not seek a second term.

4. An October blizzard decimated cattle herds in western Nebraska ranching country.

5. Former U.S. Sen. Chuck Hagel was confirmed to become secretary of defense in the Obama administration.

6. An early October tornado in the northeast Nebraska community of Wayne caused millions of dollars in damage.

7 (tie). Anthony Garcia, an Indiana doctor fired from a Creighton University medical school program a decade ago, was charged with the murders of four people associated with the program.

7 (tie). The decision to replace an outdated Grand Island home with a new Central Nebraska Veterans Home in Kearney drew protest from Hall County leaders who wished to see the facility stay in Grand Island.

8. In January, the governor approved a route through the state for the Keystone XL pipeline.

9. Speculation mounted regarding the looming governor's race. Gov. Dave Heineman, who has held the position since 2005, must leave office in 2015 due to term limits.

10. The Huskers finished a disappointing regular season at 8-4, plagued by injuries. Head coach Bo Pelini kept his job, however, with a vote of confidence from the athletic director.

⁵⁰ Source: Associated Press; surveys of Nebraska newspaper editors and broadcast news directors.

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1. Officials acknowledged the early release of hundreds of state prison inmates, despite Nebraska Supreme Court rulings regarding the correct calculation of prison sentences. The discovery by the Omaha World-Herald led to an unprecedented roundup of former inmates, the early retirement of two top prison attorneys and calls for additional reforms.

2. A tornado destroyed much of the northwest Nebraska town of Pilger in June. A 5-year-old girl died and dozens of people were injured.

3. Nebraska head football coach Bo Pelini was fired after seven seasons. He was replaced by Oregon State head coach Mike Riley.

4. The Nebraska Medical Center's biocontainment unit successfully treated an American aid worker for Ebola in September. The Omaha hospital later treated two other patients: a video journalist, who survived, and a doctor from Sierra Leone, who died soon after arriving at the hospital in November.

5. The November election saw Pete Ricketts win the race to replace term-limited Gov. Dave Heineman. Voters elected Ben Sasse to replace U.S. Sen. Mike Johanns, who chose not to seek a second term, and incumbent Lee Terry lost in Omaha's 2nd Congressional District to Democratic state Sen. Brad Ashford.

6. Voters approved a ballot measure that will raise the state's minimum wage to \$9 an hour by 2016. The measure failed to pass during the 2014 legislative session, but was placed on the November ballot through a statewide initiative petition process.

7. In February, a Nebraska judge struck down a law that allowed the Keystone XL pipeline to proceed through the state, throwing the project into legal limbo.

8. Severe spring storms damaged several communities. Tornadoes in eastern Nebraska on Mother's Day caused extensive damage in Beaver Crossing and Sutton. A few weeks later, storms generated baseball-size hail and strong winds in Blair, Craig, Fort Calhoun and Uehling.

9. Lt. Gov. Lavon Heidemann resigned from office in September and withdrew as Pete Ricketts' running mate after a judge granted a domestic violence protection order against him, which was brought by his sister. State Sen. John Nelson of Omaha replaced Heidemann as lieutenant governor and State Auditor Mike Foley was chosen as Ricketts' new running mate.

10. Prison overcrowding prompted lawmakers to examine supervised release programs in Nebraska and possible reform of the state's "good time" system, which awards credit to reduce prison sentences.